

February 2, 1976

PRESIDENT: According to your agenda we move to the rules matter at 11:30. We've completed the rest of the work. At this time we'll go to item 8 of your agenda. Chair recognizes Senator John DeCamp.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. You've had these rules in your Journal a couple of times, one time last year at the end of the session and, of course, this year. The first one I'd like to take up ... and I can't give you the page in the Journal so I'll read it while they're looking for it, had to deal with reporters and their conduct, or the places they could be on the floor. Senator Bereuter and a number of Senators had some concern about this and introduced some proposals. The following is the rules change that was adopted by the Committee to put out to the floor for your consideration. "Reporters of a regularly accredited newspaper and broadcasting stations relative to such reporters, such reporters shall remain under the balcony or in front of the desk area while the Legislature is in session, except by special permission of the presiding officer". The reason for this, ... the reasons that were presented to the Committee, is that it is disruptive to floor debate and to our decorum to have reporters wandering around here on the floor, having press interviews, one thing or another. The arguments against it, generally presented, were the reporters are no more disruptive than every other element here, so why pick on them.

I can give you some incidents that have occurred just in recent weeks that have heightened the concern on this particular problem. For example, last week when the television boys were here, and of course nothing against the television boys -- don't want to make any enemies here, anyway during the debate on the floor on some fairly important matters lights went on in the back here and we looked out and there was a reporter standing there saying "This is Tom Jones here at the floor of the Legislature interviewing so and so...", in other words it was as if they had completely taken control of the legislative floor. Lieutenant Governor Whelan, for example, and some of the other members were a little concerned. That's the rule proposal to keep the reporters under the balcony or in front of the desk area while the Legislature is in session, except by special permission of the presiding officer.

So if you have some comments or discussion on that, those are the opinions of the Committee members. Probably it should be a little more tightly regulated than it is now.

CLERK: Mr. President, the rule change is offered by Senator Bereuter and is found on page 389 of the Legislative Journal.

PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes the Speaker.

SPEAKER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I'd like to take exactly a reverse position on the amendment ... the rule change as proposed by Senator DeCamp. I think with reservations.... I will say this for all of the regularly ... regular reporters that they do have a lot of respect for decorum in this place. It is only in instances